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Letter dated 1 March 2018 from the Secretary-General addressed to the President of the Security Council

I have the honour to transmit herewith the fifty-third monthly report of the Director-General of the Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW), submitted pursuant to paragraph 12 of Security Council resolution 2118 (2013) (see annex). The report covers the period from 24 January to 23 February 2018.

Of the 27 chemical weapons production facilities declared by the Syrian Arab Republic, 25 have been verified by the OPCW Technical Secretariat as having been destroyed. The destruction of the remaining two facilities is planned for completion within two months.

With regard to the declaration of the Syrian Arab Republic, I note that OPCW is seeking further clarifications needed regarding activities conducted at the Scientific Studies and Research Centre of the Syrian Arab Republic, following analysis of 19 documents submitted by the Syrian Arab Republic to OPCW in November 2017. I also note, with continuing concern, that OPCW has not received any new information concerning the other remaining gaps, inconsistencies and discrepancies in the declaration by the Syrian Arab Republic and that these issues therefore remain unresolved. I urge the Syrian Arab Republic to extend its full and timely cooperation to OPCW.

I must reiterate my grave concern over the continuing allegations of the use of chemical weapons in the Syrian Arab Republic, and I welcome the continuing work of the OPCW fact-finding mission as it continues to study all available information regarding these allegations. The use of these weapons is intolerable and those responsible for their use must be held accountable. The United Nations stands ready to do its part, and I urge the Security Council to find unity and to shoulder its responsibility to counter this threat to international peace and security and prevent further erosion of the taboo against chemical weapons.

(*Signed*) António **Guterres**

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Annex

[Original: Arabic, Chinese, English, French, Russian and Spanish]

I have the honour to transmit to you my report entitled "Progress in the elimination of the Syrian chemical weapons programme", prepared in accordance with the relevant provisions of Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons Executive Council decision EC-M-33/DEC.1, and Security Council resolution 2118 (2013), both dated 27 September 2013, for transmission to the Security Council (see enclosure). My report covers the period from 24 January to 23 February 2018 and also covers the reporting requirements of Executive Council decision EC-M-34/DEC.1, dated 15 November 2013.

(*Signed*) Ahmet **Üzümcü**

Enclosure

[Original: Arabic, Chinese, English, French, Russian and Spanish]

Note by the Director-General of the Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons

Progress in the elimination of the Syrian chemical weapons programme

Background

1. In accordance with subparagraph 2 (f) of the decision by the Executive Council (hereinafter "the Council") at its Thirty-Third Meeting (EC-M-33/DEC.1, dated 27 September 2013), the Technical Secretariat (hereinafter "the Secretariat") is to report to the Council on a monthly basis regarding the implementation of that decision. In accordance with paragraph 12 of United Nations Security Council resolution 2118 (2013), the report by the Secretariat is also to be submitted to the Security Council through the Secretary-General.

2. The Council, at its Thirty-Fourth Meeting, adopted a decision entitled "Detailed Requirements for the Destruction of Syrian Chemical Weapons and Syrian Chemical Weapons Production Facilities" (EC-M-34/DEC.1, dated 15 November 2013). In paragraph 22 of that decision, the Council decided that the Secretariat should report on its implementation "in conjunction with its reporting required by subparagraph 2 (f) of Council decision EC-M-33/DEC.1".

3. The Council, at its Forty-Eighth Meeting, adopted a decision entitled "Reports of the OPCW Fact-Finding Mission in Syria" (EC-M-48/DEC.1, dated 4 February 2015) noting the Director-General's intent to include reports of the OPCW Fact-Finding Mission (FFM) in Syria, along with information on the Council's discussion thereof, as part of the monthly reporting pursuant to United Nations Security Council resolution 2118 (2013). Similarly, the Council, at its Eighty-First Session, adopted a decision entitled "Report by the Director-General Regarding the Declaration and Related Submissions by the Syrian Arab Republic" (EC-81/DEC.4, dated 23 March 2016), noting the Director-General's intent to provide information on the implementation of that decision.

4. The Council, at its Eighty-Third Session, adopted a decision entitled "OPCW-United Nations Joint Investigative Mechanism Reports on Chemical Weapons Use in the Syrian Arab Republic" (EC-83/DEC.5, dated 11 November 2016). In subparagraph 12 (a) of that decision, the Council decided that the Director-General shall "regularly inform the Council on the implementation of this decision and incorporate information regarding the implementation of this decision into his monthly reporting to the United Nations Security Council, through the United Nations Secretary-General, regarding EC-M-33/DEC.1".

5. This, the fifty-third monthly report, is therefore submitted in accordance with the aforementioned Council decisions and includes information relevant to the period from 24 January 2018 to 23 February 2018.

Progress achieved by the Syrian Arab Republic in meeting the requirements of Executive Council decisions EC-M-33/DEC.1 and EC-M-34/DEC.1

6. Progress by the Syrian Arab Republic is as follows:

(a) The Secretariat has verified the destruction of 25 of the 27 chemical weapons production facilities (CWPFs) declared by the Syrian Arab Republic. As

previously reported, in November 2017 the Secretariat conducted an initial inspection of the last two stationary above-ground facilities in accordance with paragraph 44 of Part V of the Verification Annex to the Chemical Weapons Convention. Thanks to the voluntary contributions provided by States Parties to the Syria Trust Fund for the Destruction of Chemical Weapons, including contributions provided in response to the Secretariat's Note S/1541/2017 (dated 9 October 2017), the Secretariat, together with the United Nations Office for Project Services (UNOPS), has begun to make all the required arrangements to assist the Syrian Arab Republic in the destruction of the facilities located at these two sites. In this regard, on 22 February 2018 the Secretariat sent a note verbale to the Syrian Arab Republic to communicate suggested amendments to the Tripartite Agreement, concluded between UNOPS, OPCW, and the Syrian Arab Republic on 22 November 2017, to reflect the work required to destroy the two remaining CWPFs. The Secretariat also issued a note verbale regarding the resources needed for the destruction. Once all arrangements are finalised, destruction will be planned for completion within two months.

(b) On 16 February 2018, the Syrian Arab Republic submitted to the Council its fifty-first monthly report (EC-87/P/NAT.5, dated 16 February 2018) regarding activities on its territory related to the destruction of its CWPFs, as required by paragraph 19 of EC-M-34/DEC.1.

Progress in the elimination of Syrian chemical weapons by States Parties hosting destruction activities

7. As stated in previous reports, all of the chemicals declared by the Syrian Arab Republic that were removed from its territory in 2014 have now been destroyed.

Activities carried out by the Secretariat with respect to Executive Council decisions EC-81/DEC.4 and EC-83/DEC.5

8. During the reporting period, the Declaration Assessment Team (DAT) completed the analysis of the 19 documents submitted by the Syrian Arab Republic on 10 November 2017. The documents contain details of chemical weapons research and development activities conducted at the Scientific Studies and Research Centre (SSRC) and acknowledge the involvement and role of the SSRC in the Syrian Arab Republic's chemical weapons programme. Based on the analysis of the documents, the DAT has determined that further clarifications regarding activities conducted at the SSRC are required.

9. On 29 January 2018, the Director-General addressed a letter to the Deputy Foreign Minister of the Syrian Arab Republic, Dr Faisal Mekdad, in which he asked for further clarifications regarding activities conducted at the SSRC, and attached to his letter a non-exhaustive list of questions.

10. Additionally, the Director-General stated in his letter that the Secretariat had not received any new information concerning the other remaining gaps, inconsistencies, and discrepancies in the declaration of the Syrian Arab Republic and related submissions. The Director-General urged the authorities of the Syrian Arab Republic to submit this information as soon as possible in order to allow sufficient time for it to be included in the Secretariat's next report on the work of the DAT, which will be submitted to the Council at its Eighty-Seventh Session in March 2018. Through a note verbale dated 19 February 2018, the Syrian Arab Republic provided answers to the SSRC-related questions raised in the Director-General's letter of 29 January 2018. The Secretariat is currently reviewing the answers provided by the Syrian Arab Republic.

11. As stated by the Director-General in his opening statement to the Conference of the States Parties at its Twenty-Second Session (C-22/DG.20, dated 27 November

2017), the second round of inspections at the Barzah and Jamrayah facilities of the SSRC in accordance with paragraph 11 of Council decision EC-83/DEC.5 was concluded on 22 November 2017. The samples taken during the mission were sealed, packaged, and shipped to the OPCW Laboratory, and were received at the Laboratory on 15 January 2018 in the presence of representatives of the Syrian Arab Republic. The samples were split on 9 February 2018, also in the presence of representatives of the Syrian Arab Republic, and sent to two OPCW designated laboratories for analysis. A report on the second round of inspections will be submitted in due course.

Other activities carried out by the Secretariat with respect to the Syrian Arab Republic

12. At the request of the Syrian authorities, the Secretariat deployed a team to several sites in the Syrian Arab Republic from 6 to 12 February 2018 to obtain further information concerning items discovered by the Syrian armed forces. The Secretariat is currently assessing the collected information and will issue a report on the mission in due course.

13. UNOPS continues to provide support to the OPCW Mission in the Syrian Arab Republic in accordance with the Tripartite Agreement.

14. As at the cut-off date of this report, one OPCW staff member was deployed as part of the OPCW Mission in the Syrian Arab Republic.

Supplementary resources

15. As previously reported, a Trust Fund for Syria Missions was established in November 2015 to support the OPCW FFM and other remaining activities, such as those of the DAT. As at the cut-off date of this report, total contributions stood at EUR 15.7 million. Contribution agreements had been concluded with Canada, Chile, Finland, France, Germany, Monaco, New Zealand, the Republic of Korea, Sweden, Switzerland, the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, the United States of America, and the European Union.

Activities carried out with respect to the OPCW Fact-Finding Mission in Syria

16. Guided by Council decisions EC-M-48/DEC.1 and EC-M-50/DEC.1 (dated 23 November 2015), as well as by United Nations Security Council resolution 2209 (2015), the FFM continued to study all available information relating to the allegations of use of chemical weapons in the Syrian Arab Republic.

Conclusion

17. The main focus of the future activities of the OPCW Mission in the Syrian Arab Republic will be on the activities of the FFM and on the implementation of Council decisions EC-83/DEC.5 and EC-81/DEC.4, including declaration-related issues, as well as on the verification of the destruction of the two stationary above-ground facilities, and annual inspections of the underground structures already verified as destroyed.